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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, we praise You that You continue to rescue us from ourselves. We will tell about the wonders You have worked on our behalf. We are born in sin and formed by iniquity, but Your power continues to transform.

Lord, You have kept us from stumbling and disgrace. Continue to provide our Senators with the blessings of Your mercy and peace. Lead them not into temptation, but deliver them from evil.

Use our lawmakers to restore health and unity to a nation desperately desiring Your purposes to prevail. May Your favor keep us all secure.

We pray in Your loving Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BARASSO). The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 1 minute in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNIZING THE IOWA AIR NATIONAL GUARD'S 185TH AIR REFUELING WING

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, on November 27, it was announced that the Iowa Air National Guard's 185th Air Refueling Wing in Sioux City, IA, has been awarded the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award.

This award was earned for the wing's exceptional service to the Air Force in 2019, which included the usual thousands of flying hours and refueling, but it also included things like the humanitarian efforts of this wing's effort in the multiple Puerto Rican natural disasters.

In addition, the 185th Wing has been working tirelessly to support cleanup efforts from this great windstorm in Iowa called the derecho, which wiped out 800,000 acres of crops through the middle of Iowa. It also included such things that they may not be recognized for enough—helping with the COVID-19 testings in the State of Iowa.

So I say congratulations to the 185th Wing, and, most importantly, thank you for your dedication to serving our State and country.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, the American people are hurting. We are in the thick of one of the worst national crises in modern memory, and people's eyes are fixed on Congress. They need the House and the Senate to stop chasing our tails and make a law.

There are small business employees who have held onto their jobs all this time because of the Paycheck Protection Program but are facing the prospect they might be laid off now, with vaccines just around the corner, because Washington fumbles the ball in the red zone.

There are medically vulnerable Americans who have watched Operation Warp Speed appear to succeed at a historic pace, but Congress can't even agree to fully fund the distribution efforts that will get the vaccines to people.

There are Americans who have been thrown out of work, through no fault of their own, who are watching Federal aid programs tick toward expiration in a few weeks, even though neither side in Congress opposes extending them.

Senate Republicans have made one offer after another after another to try and make law on all the significant areas where nobody even disagrees. We spent July, August, September, October, and November trying different ways to create common ground, but the Speaker of the House and the Senate Democratic leader have been just as consistent. At every turn, they have delayed, deflected, moved the goalposts, and made the huge number of places where Congress agrees into a hostage—into a hostage—of the few places where we do not agree.

Back in the summertime, I pointed out the obvious. I said leading Democrats simply just didn't want any more help to reach American families before the election occurred. The other side claimed great offense; how insulting to even suggest that such cynicism might be at play.

And now they are admitting it out loud. Yesterday, on CNN, the Democratic whip was asked point-blank why the Speaker and the Democratic leader were so unwilling to play ball back in the autumn. The No. 2 Democrat responded: "[Well], there was some exuberance involved because an election was coming." Well, he gets points for candor: "because an election was coming."

A few days ago, Speaker PELOSI told reporters why she reversed months of

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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